

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR GLORIA MOLINA

July 28, 2009

Losing children to abuse and neglect is tragic. While it may not be possible to prevent every child death, we must continue to find ways to strengthen policies and protocols to secure the safety of children under our jurisdiction.

The disturbing number of child deaths that have occurred recently requires immediate action. DCFS must implement tighter management controls to ensure that social workers conduct their day to day responsibilities as required by DCFS policies and State laws. This includes monitoring each and every face-to-face contact they make, and every interview they conduct of a neighbor, teacher, relative and friend to assess the entire health, mental health and well being of the family unit.

One of the essential factors in determining a child's safety is the reliance on medical and mental health professionals. Many times, children are sent to private health care providers who may not have the expertise necessary in child abuse and neglect. With the recent development of our medical HUB system, we have the opportunity to rely upon our own county department experts to track the well being of

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Molina _____

Ridley-Thomas _____

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Antonovich _____

Knabe _____

children that come to the attention of DCFS through the 14,000 calls a month to the hotline. We must examine how stronger internal management controls and accountability, coupled with multi-departmental coordination (DCFS, DMH, DHS) can better support and track the safety plans developed for children in this county.

I, THEREFORE, MOVE that the Department of Children and Family Services enhance its computerized management oversight to ensure that all visits are completed, that case notes are reflective of the services provided and that all levels of management—including Children’s Social Worker, Supervising Social Worker, Assistant Regional Administrator, and Regional Administrator—review referrals, confirm that visits have been completed, and review the quality of the services being provided to a family.

I, FURTHER, MOVE that DCFS ensure Management has reviewed all the documents and case narratives on doctors visits, collateral contacts, mental health evaluations, etc, prior to approving the disposition of the computer record. Furthermore, all “unfounded” referrals must be reviewed by the Supervising Social Worker and the Assistant Regional Administrator with the final accountability resting with the Regional Administrator.

Additional triggers that will require the evaluation under the direction of the Office of the DCFS Medical Director include any medical or mental health concerns of the children or caregivers that could have a negative impact on the child and/or when the safety plan includes elderly caregivers.

I further move that DCFS consider a pilot to be implemented at the LAC+USC East San Gabriel Valley Medical Hub where a families’ health and mental health care can be tracked in a coordinated manner. Such coordination would enable DCFS to rely

upon internal, trusted county departments that possess the extensive experience in child abuse and neglect not always present amongst private health care providers.

I direct DCFS, CEO, DHS and DMH to report the feasibility of the implementation of these recommended actions at the August 25, 2009 Board Meeting.

MMA